



1. A quick intro about yourself?

My blogging name is Dave Levert (Levert is travel spelled backwards) and I am passionate and at times obsessed about travel. I've enjoyed writing as long as I can remember. My first big trip overseas was to Nepal trekking up to Everest Base Camp. I began my travel blog, Dave's Travel Corner based on the experiences from that trip – combining my love of writing and my interest in helping other travelers. I also enjoy wine – and have visited, tasted and written extensive reviews about more than 1,000 unique Napa Valley based wineries, producers or tasting rooms for my Napa Wine Project website: www.napawineproject.com

2. How would you describe your style of travel and your travel blogging content?

Often solo travel – travelling very light with just a small backpack. I look for experiences and unique activities in a particular place. I love the extremes of travel, from budget backpacking and hitch hiking in certain situations to the most luxurious accommodations on the planet.

3. What has been the most surreal place you have visited? What made it so magical?

Antarctica – the weather changes so dramatically. I never knew there were so many shades of grey and black before visiting this continent. Mountain climbing, roped up with crampons and ice ax in hand – glance over and see penguins sliding down in the snow next to you – you know you aren't in a 'normal' mountain climbing situation! The impressive natural beauty, the wildlife,

the remoteness, the weather and the harshness of the environment all makes for a very memorable trip.

4. What's one of your most cherished travel memories or moments?

This usually involves mountain climbing with friends with a bit of hardship and alcohol afterwards - thrown into the mix. Not necessarily even reaching the summit – but more of the bonding that happens when climbing challenging terrain at high elevation with people – your relying on them and they are relying on you during the climb. Climbs in Nepal and in Peru in particular.

5. Do you tend to hang out with or meet locals more often than meeting other travelers?

I tend to meet locals more – although its easier for me to establish a connection with someone local in the digital world first rather than striking up a conversation with a random stranger.

6. What is one city or country that didn't live up to your expectations? Why?

Perhaps Florida – its really flat and despite numerous trips to the state I haven't yet found anything really inspiring. Probably part of my challenge of finding something attractive about the state dates back to my first trip to Florida. We had just wrapped up an incredible stressful time of building a solar car, driving it across country to a solar race – ultimately not making the qualifiers and then we found ourselves in the Everglades in July attempting to camp without having tents. The mosquitoes were absolutely horrific - it was incredibly hot and humid and I was completely worn out from the efforts we had put into getting the solar car ready in time for the race. It was a nightmare situation.

7. How many countries have you travelled to & how long have you been a travel blogger for?

171 countries and territories of which 149 are countries. Mongolia next month will be my 150th country. I started writing for my travel site in late 1996 (wasn't even called blogging back then!) inspired by a trip I took to Nepal that same year. Want to see what a basic site looked like from the late 1990s? Here is a link to the earliest screen capture that Wayback machine has of my site from January 1998 – pretty basic compared to sites these days. I moved the site from a sub domain to its own domain www.davestravelcorner.com in 1999:

<https://web.archive.org/web/19980114050602/http://www.pon.net/travel/>

8. **What is the most luxurious place you have stayed at? What was it like and where?**

Lizard Island Australia, several resorts in the Maldives including Baros. Phulay Bay (Ritz Carlton) Thailand – at this level everything is elevated including service, the food, the spa, the accommodation, the grounds and often the visual surrounding beauty. In places like these, one feels like a king or queen – especially at the places that provide a private butler. Luxurious rooms are fully stocked with drinks and food. The overwater bungalows in the Maldives are especially impressive – with a partial glass floor and a private swimming pool on the deck. Wow!

9. **What are biggest advantages and disadvantages of being a travel blogger ?**

Advantages are the lifestyle and the freedom. A major disadvantage is earning steady income and the challenges of earning income from travel blogging. When I started there were few online travel journals and perhaps my site stood out a bit more for that very reason – today there are thousands.

10. **Do you have any little hidden gems or local secrets that you have discovered about certain places you have been to?**

Dig deeper – get beyond the first page of Google. Go beyond the major tourist attractions. Taking the Napa Valley as example – where there are more than 500 physical wineries – and hundreds of brands - research and visit some of the off the beaten path wineries – there are literally hundreds of these – visits are often with the owner or winemaker and are often highly personalized experiences.

11. **What should travelers be doing on every trip to maximize their experience while travelling?**

Meeting and spending time with locals and seeking out unique experiences and or attractions. Getting out of their comfort zone to some extent, whether it is exploring types of food, activities or other experiences.